



# CHAPTER VII: PLAYING THE GAME

In *Blue Rose*, heroes attempt many deeds, from wooing hearts to felling shadowspawn. This chapter—joined with the chapters on skills, feats, and arcana—gives rules for doing things, whether mundane or heroic, in the game.

The chapter focuses on three action categories: social actions, physical actions, and fighting. The chapter closes with an overview of environmental hazards that sometimes arise in heroes' adventures.

## SOCIAL ACTIONS

There's more to adventures than just fighting and feats of daring. Characters also interact in various ways. Heroes try to negotiate agreements between disputing parties or go on diplomatic missions for the sovereign. Villains taunt and threaten or even try to sway heroes to their side. People get into disagreements or debates. Whole adventures may hinge on convincing the right person at the right time.

### Influencing Attitudes

The Narrator determines the starting attitude of any character the heroes encounter during the game. The heroes can then try to influence the character's attitude using Charisma and various interaction skills, such as Diplomacy and Intimidate. The **Influence** table shows the effects of character attitudes and the Difficulty of attempting to change someone's with a check. Note that a particularly bad influence check can actually make a character's attitude worse. For example, getting less than 5 on a Diplomacy check makes an unfriendly character turn hostile. In general, a hero can attempt to influence another character only once in any given scene.

While heroes can influence the attitudes of Narrator characters, note that heroes and Narrator characters

generally cannot use interaction skills to change the general attitudes of the heroes. Players choose the attitudes of their heroes and when they change. Only things like arcana can directly influence a hero's overall attitude. Heroes are affected by applications of some interaction checks, such as attempts to deceive them using Bluff or shaking their confidence with Intimidate, but their overall attitudes remain under the control of the players.

### ATTITUDE DEFINITIONS

| Attitude    | Means                         | Possible Actions                                   |
|-------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Hostile     | Will take risks to oppose you | Attack, interfere, berate, flee                    |
| Unfriendly  | Wishes you ill                | Mislead, gossip, avoid, watch suspiciously, insult |
| Indifferent | Doesn't care either way       | Socially acceptable interaction                    |
| Friendly    | Wishes you well               | Chat, advise, offer limited help, advocate         |
| Helpful     | Will take risks to aid you    | Protect, back up, heal, aid, support               |

## INFLUENCE

| Starting Attitude | — — — New Attitude Result — — — |             |             |          |         |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|---------|
|                   | Hostile                         | Unfriendly  | Indifferent | Friendly | Helpful |
| Hostile           | less than 20                    | 20          | 25          | 35       | 50      |
| Unfriendly        | less than 5                     | 5           | 15          | 25       | 40      |
| Indifferent       | —                               | less than 1 | 1           | 15       | 30      |
| Friendly          | —                               | —           | less than 1 | 1        | 20      |

## Social Interaction

The various social actions heroes may wish to accomplish are governed by interaction skills. Note that these skills are all usable untrained, so anyone can attempt these actions. Naturally charismatic people tend to be good at them, but those with real talent or training (reflected by ranks in the appropriate interaction skills) are the best.

### Bluff

Bluff is ultimately the skill of getting what you want by misleading or at least exaggerating. Completely honest social interactions should use another skill (usually Diplomacy). Bluff is opposed by itself or Sense Motive; it's difficult to trick an expert liar, and some people just have a sense of when someone is trying to pull the wool over their eyes.

### Fast-Talk

The basic use of Bluff is lying and getting away with it. Make opposed Bluff checks, or Bluff versus Sense Motive, to see if someone gets caught in a lie. If the liar wins, then the story is believable. Heroes or Narrator characters who successfully fast-talk other Narrator characters can convince them to do things based on the success of the Bluff check, and the believability of their story.

### Haggling

Haggling for a price or a similar deal is likewise an opposed check to see who bluffs best. The seller uses Bluff while the buyer uses Bluff or Sense Motive, whichever is better. If the seller wins, the sale is made, with a 25

percent increase in price per 5 points the check exceeds the opposing result. If the buyer wins, then the price doesn't go above market value (the price listed in **Chapter VI: Wealth and Equipment**) and is negotiated down 10 percent per 5 points the check exceeds the opposing result; although, the buyer still has the option to say no if the final price is too much.

### Seduction

The subtle dance of seduction involves using Bluff to get someone to do what you want with promises (implied or explicit) of sexual favors. The seducer makes a Bluff check, while the prey makes a Bluff or Sense Motive check, whichever is better. The seducer's Difficulty increases if his suggestions go against the target's personality in some way. Use the modifiers in the Bluff skill description (see **Chapter III: Skills**) as a guideline.

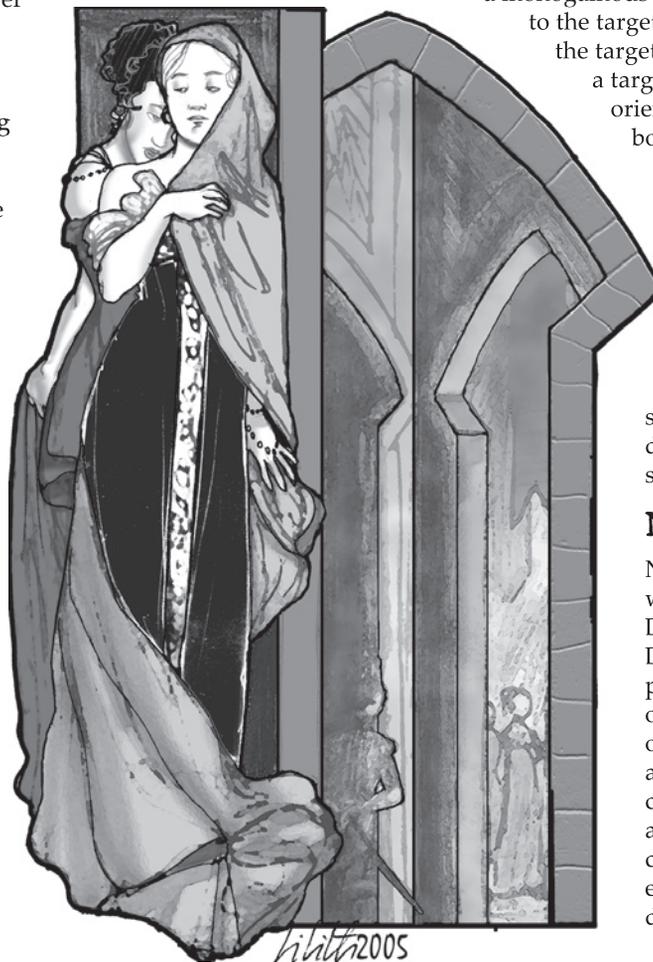
For example, attempting to seduce someone in a monogamous relationship entails a risk to the target, for a +5 to +10 bonus on the target's check. Trying to seduce a target with a different sexual orientation gives them a +20 bonus on their Bluff or Sense Motive check.

### Diplomacy

Diplomacy is the gentle art of persuasion, debate, discussion, and etiquette. It is the premier interaction skill for those interested in dealing with others in social situations.

### Negotiation

Negotiating an agreement with another party is a Diplomacy check, with the Difficulty based on the other party's attitude. The outcome of the negotiation is based on the other party's final attitude. An indifferent war chief may become a friendly ally, while a potential ally could become unfriendly or even hostile if negotiations don't go well.



## Persuasion

Convincing someone of the rightness of your view is a Diplomacy check. The Narrator evaluates the subject's attitude toward your viewpoint or the subject at hand (rather than you personally), and your check can improve that attitude.

## Making Friends

Make Diplomacy checks to favorably dispose someone toward you. A friendly or helpful result means you have a potential new friend, if you choose to maintain the relationship over time.

## Foreign Customs

When your hero is dealing with unusual or foreign customs, the Narrator may ask for a Diplomacy check for you to avoid making any faux pas. The Difficulty is based on how obscure the custom is: Difficulty 10 for slightly obscure customs, Difficulty 15 for moderately obscure ones, and Difficulty 20 to 30 for very obscure ones. A failed check means a potentially embarrassing social blunder, which may worsen the attitude of your hosts, apply a penalty to further interaction checks, or both.

## Gather Information

Of all the interaction skills, Gather Information deals most with social groups, whether it's finding things out or spreading rumors through certain social circles.

## Assessing Social Situations

You can make a Gather Information check to get a feel for any social situation. It's Difficulty 15 to get a general idea of the mood of a situation, as well as the prevailing attitude (so you have an idea of the Difficulty of using other interaction skills). Picking up on subtle undercurrents may require a higher check result, at the Narrator's discretion.

## Bureaucracy

Gather Information can help cut through red tape and navigate through bureaucracies. The Difficulty of the Gather Information check depends on the challenge, from 10, for navigating simple bureaucratic procedures, to 20 or more, for dealing with particularly complex or hidebound bureaucracies.

## Spreading Rumors

You can also use Gather Information to put information out where others will find or hear of it. The trick is to ensure the rumors are not traced back to you. This is an opposed check of Gather Information. If you win, then you successfully pass on whatever information you want. If you lose, then the other party traces the rumors back to you, and reacts accordingly.

## Intimidate

Although intimidation is not the approach for polite society, sometimes a forceful approach is called for, and the Intimidate skill covers all sorts of forceful social interactions, not just threats.

## Command

Make an Intimidate check when you bark a command or issue an order to someone and want it obeyed *now*. The Narrator can grant bonuses for circumstances; a noble issuing a command to a commoner has a clear advantage, while the sovereign of Aldis has a major one! A check is only necessary in cases where there's some question about whether or not the subject will obey the order. A loyal subject or retainer, for example, will carry out routine orders without need for a check, but a command to leave a comrade behind on the battlefield may require one, for example.

## Interrogation

To get information out of someone by exerting pressure, make an Intimidate check against the result of the subject's Sense Motive check or Will saving throw, whichever has the greater bonus. The Narrator can modify the check using the modifiers for the Bluff skill (see **Chapter III: Skills**), so it's harder to get subjects to give up information that compromises them or their allies. A successful Intimidate check gets the information. Modifiers may apply for the use of interrogation techniques ranging from sleep deprivation to torture, and a successful Intimidate check for interrogation can provide a +2 bonus on a Mind Probe check.

## Perform

Perform is an interaction skill aimed at an audience rather than an individual, but it can still influence the audience's attitude overall, so long as the Narrator feels the performance is appropriate and the performer is trying to shift everyone's attitude in the same way. An envoy might use Perform specialties, like comedy or stringed instruments, to warm up an audience and improve their attitude before attempting skills like Diplomacy and Gather Information. This is one of several reasons why many of the Sovereign's Finest are skilled in the performing arts.

## Sense Motive

Sense Motive is the catch-all skill for resisting social interactions. While each interaction skill typically opposes itself (it's harder to trick someone who's skilled in Bluff, for example), Sense Motive covers a general social shrewdness and awareness of the ins and outs of interaction.

Sense Motive checks are passive, in that they're only made to resist other interactions. At the Narrator's discretion, someone who makes a successful Sense Motive check to avoid a particular interaction can make another check with a Difficulty 10 as an aid another action. The character must be able to communicate with the subjects, and point out the flaws in the interaction to give them the +2 aid another bonus to resist it. This can range from an expert debater poking holes in someone's argument to an impassioned plea to a crowd not to listen to a rabble-rouser. Note this is only to aid others against particular interaction checks. If the character is also trying to sway them to his point of view, then it's more likely an opposed interaction check between the two parties.